



## Children's Rights and Alternative Care: What next for Scotland? Learning from the CRC Day of General Discussion

22 June 2022, 2:00-3:30pm, Microsoft Teams

Guest speakers include:

- Professor Ann Skelton, Member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child
- Bruce Adamson, Scotland's Children and Young People's Commissioner
- Megan Moffat, Human Rights Policy Officer, Who Cares? Scotland



## DGD Webinar Recording

Heather Ottaway: Well hello and welcome, everyone to the webinar this afternoon. A very warm welcome to everyone. We have a really diverse audience today, both from within Scotland and elsewhere in the UK and also internationally. So we're really pleased to welcome everybody. I'm Dr. Heather Ottaway. And I'm the head of Evidence and Innovation at CELCIS. I'll be co-chairing the webinar today with my colleague Miriana Giraldi who is our International Associate. We're going to think about and discuss the 2021 Day of General Discussion, which was convened by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, and which focused on children's rights and alternative care. So we'll hear about and think about the outcomes and recommendations from the Day of General Discussion and also consider their implications for Scotland. And before I briefly introduce the speakers, I just have a couple of quick housekeeping things to go through. So first of all, on the welcome slide, there was a Menti code. You're very welcome to submit questions as we go through the webinar today. And there will be time for our main speaker, Professor Ann Skelton and our panelists, to think about and answer the questions. A couple of very practical things. All attendees, microphones and cameras will be off. We're also going to record the session and have it available on the website. Just to also reassure you that attendees names won't be present on the recording, because we

are going to edit the recording to ensure that at the end. So without further ado, I'm going to just quickly go through who our speakers are today. We are very fortunate to have Professor Ann Skelton with us today. She's an internationally recognised expert in child law and worked as a children's rights lawyer in South Africa for 30 years. She is Professor of Law at the University of Pretoria, and is currently a visiting professor with us at the University of Strathclyde with the Institute for Inspiring Children's Futures, and is a member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and chaired the UN CRC committee working group for the Day of the General Discussion. So we're very fortunate to have you with us, Ann. Joining us today on our panel later is Bruce Adamson, the Children and Young People's Commissioner for Scotland, who has worked over many years to ensure that the laws affecting children's lives are fair. He's been Commissioner since May 2017. And prior to that worked as a lawyer and built up over 20 years of experience working on children's rights issues. We're also joined by Megan Moffat, the human rights policy advisor at Who Cares? Scotland, which for those potentially outside Scotland is a national voluntary organisation, working with care experienced young people and care leavers supporting them to have their voice heard. And finally, we're joined by one of our colleagues at CELCIS, Joanne McMeeking, who is head of Improving Care Experiences, and has a particular focus on core practice assessment, planning and review for children in need of care and protection. So those are going to be our panel speakers today. And I'm now going to hand over to Miriana who's my co-chair.

Miriana Giraldi: Thank you so much, Heather, and welcome to everyone. I am really pleased that we have some time to spend together today to consider the Day of General Discussion on Children's Rights and Alternative Care, and to also hear about the outcomes and the recommendations that Ann will share with us in a little while. The Committee just adopted them last week. So that's going to be very exciting to learn more about the outcomes of the work. So before we jump into the core of the seminar today, I would like to take just a couple of minutes to talk about what are Days of General Discussion for those people that may be a little less familiar with them. So the Days of General Discussion are really opportunities to look specifically in more detail at specific articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child or certain themes and gain a deeper understanding of the contents and implications of the CRC in that respect. They're usually convened every two years, and they culminate in an event where this discussion happens with inputs from, from children and people working in the sector. But that event is really a combination of a long process of preparation, which is led and coordinated by the Committee on the Rights of the Child. And in doing that preparatory work, the committee, also on this occasion, collaborated with a very large, actually, coalition of civil society organisations and NGOs from right across the world; and most importantly, also with advisory teams of children and young people, who also came from all different regions in the world, and who very importantly, had direct lived experience of care or protection systems. So participation and embedding the voice of those who have lived experience was really at the heart of all of the work of the DGD. That what led up to it and also

afterwards. And it was really quite clear how important the issue of, of the rights of children in care or at the edges of care are. To give you an example, and share a few numbers, the Committee received 195 submissions. So these were contributions from individuals and organisations from right across the world on varied themes that all connected with alternative care. Children and Young People also had the opportunity to express their views and share their experiences through a global survey of children, young people between the ages of five and 25 years. And 1,888 of them took part and shared their responses, which really highlights how many individuals and how many families and communities are really impacted by the issues of care and child protection. The intention of the DGD was not so much to focus on issues, but really to be solutions-orientated and forward looking so that we could come together and coalesce in really discussing what needs to be done in order to improve the situation for children and young people. There were a lot of contributions shared from Scotland as well, just to name a few themes people shared about topics as varied as early intervention and providing family support, about care in the justice systems, about supporting people in transitions, including transitions to adulthood, the importance of voice, the importance of attending to trauma and mental health. And also, there were examples of the impact of COVID and the lockdown measures. But some of the most important messages are also related to relationships, for example, relationships between brothers and sisters in care, but all relationships that are relevant to children and young people. And that message really came across loud and clear. To give you a final number, the word love was mentioned 688 times in that global survey of children and young people. And they really shared what is important to them and what they would like us to attend to in our work.

I'm going to shortly pass the floor to Professor Ann Skelton, who will give us a more detailed presentation now about the Day of General Discussion, and that will also share outcomes and recommendation. After that we will also hear throughout the seminar on a few occasions from care experienced people, because their voices and their participation is at the heart of what we do as well, and we wanted to reflect that in today's seminar also. So we'll share with you some pre-recorded videos that we did with Saffron who is our care experienced consultant who answered a few specific questions that we had, and that also shared on her experience of being involved into the Day of General Discussion. That interview will be complemented by a few quotes from children and young people who did not answer those specific questions, but those quotes come from submissions that were sent to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. And we looked in particular at what children and young people from Scotland, the UK or nearby mentioned, not because the inputs of children from other parts of the world isn't important, of course it is. But simply because today we would like to reflect on the implications of all of this work for what we do here in Scotland at the national level. And that's why we wanted to hone in particularly to those voices. After that, we will have a panel discussion, and there will also be an opportunity, as Heather also mentioned, for you to raise some questions. Some of you already shared some questions you had in advance, so thank you very much for that. And

we'll do our best to go through as many topics as we can, but we might not be able to reply to absolutely everybody. But I'm sure we have a very rich and helpful discussion today. So, without further ado, it's now my great pleasure to pass the floor to Professor Ann Skelton.

Ann Skelton: Good afternoon, everyone. It's wonderful to be here. Even though I'm speaking to you online, and we're all online, I am actually in Glasgow. So, I am here among you. And I'm very thrilled to be talking today about the DGD and its outcomes. And this is in fact, the first public opportunity that I, or I think, anyone from the Committee has been invited to speak about the outcome report and the recommendations because of the fact that they are so new, having been released, actually on Friday afternoon. So, I would like to open my PowerPoint presentation. So I'm just going to open the share tray to do that. I trust that I will be notified if something isn't working properly. So, I'm going to go ahead.

It's all fine.

Great, great. Thank you. Well, Miriana has given a great background on what these Days of General Discussion are all about. And I think what's important to understand is that this is the kind of way that the Committee goes into much more detail than is possible in the normal day to day work of the Committee to be able to hone in on a particular theme and to really engage properly. And it's also an opportunity for participation by stakeholders, which is not always so easy in the daily work of the Committee. So for us, it's a great opportunity at the Committee to be able to really focus on specific aspects. Just a little bit of background to this DGD. The Committee's had DGD back in 2005, which was about children without parental care. And in fact, there was a connection here, a Scottish connection to CELCIS' predecessor, SIRCC, which did make written submissions on that 2005 DGD, and I believe that there was also a care experienced young person who participated there, from WHO CARES? Scotland; so we see a long history coming up to this current DGD of Scottish involvement. As we all know, I think that DGD was very important because it actually kick-started the process that resulted in the Guidelines on alternative care, which have become very important as a set of guiding principles and an instrument that can assist States when they're implementing rights under the Convention in relation to alternative care. Again, there is a connection here with CELCIS because CELCIS, of course, published the handbook, entitled "Moving Forward", which was also in which I believe Nigel Cantwell was involved in the drafting of those as well. And of course, he is very well known for his involvement in the drafting of the Convention itself. Coming to more recent times, the Global Study on Children Deprived of Their Liberty also included a chapter on something that was entitled 'Children and Institutional Care' and that led to a lot of discussion and debate about alternative care, in the context of the global study. And around the same time, there was the UN General Assembly Resolution on the Rights of the Child, which had a specific focus on children without parental care. And I'm sure that

many of you were probably involved in coming up with those - with the key asks that civil society put forward for that process, which have also been very influential. Now in the concept note for the DGD, was made clear that what we wanted was meaningful engagement with children and young people. We wanted to make sure that we were building on work already done through that General Assembly Resolution. And through the global study, we wanted in particular, to acknowledge the harms that can occur in care, the abuse of children that occurs in care sometimes, and to explore the access to justice and accountability mechanisms relating to that. We wanted to also, actually, when the DG D was first announced, we didn't know that COVID was on the horizon. And of course, COVID had a big impact because it caused this DGD to get delayed. But in the process, we also decided that that was going to be a very important focus as well. So, one of the focus areas for the DGD was looking at the impact of COVID, and what we could learn about that for the future in the context of alternative care. And then, of course, we also wanted to create opportunities to learn from evidence. And we received many, many submissions, as you've heard, looking at a range of different issues, including preventing family separation, looking at the whole question of quality alternative care, strengthening child protection systems, and looking at innovative approaches to complex solutions. So this is what we said in the Concept Note that we hoped to, to deal with in the DGD.

You've heard already from Miriana, and I won't dwell on it, but we got a lot of written submissions, video submissions, and children and young people were involved in collecting information, which they fed back to us. The children's participation process was very detailed. And this actually is a screenshot of a document that was put out, in which the children set up their survey questions and sent that out. So, in the end, we had to hold this DGD online, and it was the first virtual DGD that the Committee had ever had. And there were negatives, and positives, obviously, coming out of that. On the one hand, it was disappointing, because it's really great to have in person sessions and to be all together in the same room. And it probably was disappointing for children who are involved who might originally have thought they would come to Geneva, and then they didn't. But on the upside, we found that there was huge participation in this DGD, which we hadn't been able to achieve in some of the previous DGDs, and particularly many, many more children and care experienced people were able to be involved. We held it over two days. And the timing on the two days was different. And this was in order to try and capture people from different parts of the globe, so that we could be truly international, in our perspectives. And we had participants from indeed all parts of the world and from very many different parts of society. And I've just flagged all of those there on the slide, so that you have an idea about the different types of groupings that were participating in this event. The discussions took place around certain focus areas, and I've just made them in different colours on the screen so that you can see them. Obviously, preventing separation was a major theme. We didn't want this DGD to be about the rights of children in alternative care, but rather the rights of children in relation to alternative care. And that obviously would also be very much focused around trying to

prevent children coming into alternative care in the first place, so, the preventive aspects were very important. The care needs and rights of children who were separated and unaccompanied or without care, access to justice and accountability, which I've mentioned already as having been very important for those children who have suffered abuse in the system. Quality of alternative care was also something that was flagged as being an important area to discuss, and also transforming systems towards family and community-based care, looking at a whole range of evidence and experience around that. The outcomes document process - so we had a background document and then the outcomes document actually reflects what came out of the DGD. It is not the Committee's views on that it is more of a true reflection of what was discussed. So, it doesn't necessarily represent the committee's views but rather what was expressed there. And I think what was important was that this process gave us an opportunity to take stock of what was already happening out there to identify good practices. And then of course, all of this information went into coming up with recommendations. And again, you will see that these recommendations flow from the DGD itself. And one of the recommendations or some of the recommendations are actually to the Committee. And then the Committee has selected certain recommendations which it has endorsed. And so the recommendations that are there at the end of the outcomes document are recommendations that have been endorsed by the Committee.

So, I'm jumping forward, actually, to those recommendations, because we have time limits here and I can't go through too much detail. And even here, I'm not able to touch on everything that's in the recommendations only really what I would call the headlines of these recommendations.

So, category A the first set, the study theme was about ensuring that all children grow up in safe and nurturing families. Here we have a set of recommendations that fall under these headings. All families should have the support that they need to provide safe, nurturing and loving environments. Child care and protection systems should be overhauled to focus on family based care. Children, young people, parents, caregivers, and others with care experience, should receive support to share their perspectives and to meaningfully and safely participate in system reform. So, this is not only about setting up how we would like to see those preventive aspects working but also suggesting that people with care experience including people who are currently children in care should also be brought to the table of discussions about reforms of systems.

The second category relates to addressing the care needs and rights of children who are separated unaccompanied or without care. And this, of course, covers situations of Children on the Move - children in situations of migration - but also looked at aspects such as children in street situations. So here again, unfortunately I can't get into the detail. But we had some interesting recommendations here under these headings, protecting these rights, and also ensuring comprehensive and non-discriminating, non-discriminatory

national reintegration strategies. So, as I've said, I hope that you will be able to access the recommendations and look at them in more detail, because I really am just giving you, you know, the headline points here.

Ensuring access to justice and accountability for children and young people in alternative care, and interestingly, here as well, we're bringing in adults who grew up in care, because this is the area of the work where intergenerational equity comes to the fore, where we can see that people who are now adults, but only later in their lives realise some of the impacts of their experiences when they were in care, come forward and need to be able to seek redress for that. And not only are they deserving of having their own justice needs met, but they also help us to see what went wrong in the past and help us to ensure that this kind of thing should not be repeated. And so from that point of view, their inputs are very important to children in care today as well. This also flags the importance of states being accountable for violations of children's rights committed in the context of alternative care, and that's both the current generations but could extend to generations in the past as well. And then the importance of child friendly justice systems, how do children who are currently, now, in the system, have access to seeking remedies if they feel that their rights have been violated, who can provide them with assistance to do that; how can we remove the barriers that might be there, preventing them from being able to do that.

Delivering appropriate quality alternative care services in line with human rights standards: so very important and difficult conversation sometimes around quality because there's a very strong push to say that we want to keep children out of alternative care as much as possible. But at the same time, we know that children are still in care all around the world, and that there are some situations in which short term alternative care is still very much part of our current systems. And therefore, we need to make sure that what's on offer there, offers the best possible chance for good outcomes for those children. And that's where the quality of alternative care comes in. And this is not only residential care, it's also children in foster care, and could even extend back to what do we mean when we say, good quality care, even within families? So, this part of the discussions focused in on that, and said that, you know, it's quite clear that if you're not going to be in alternative care, then that care has to be of a high quality. And it needs to be in line with a human rights standard. So, we're not talking about a kind of welfarist approach, but more of an approach that says that high quality has got to be measurable against human rights standards. It's also very important that alternative care must uphold children's family communities, their identities, their cultural relationships, and their broader networks. And this is crucially important for quality care; strengthening the social service workforce is hugely important for quality care. And also, there is that nexus of leaving care and what states need to do to put the support in place to allow children to transition out of care, because this is also a very important feature for those outcomes. I think also in this quality pieces, where we heard a lot from children about love, as was mentioned by

Miriana earlier, this was a very big theme at the DGD. And that sense of children feeling loved and feeling secure, came through very strongly in their evaluation of what they thought high quality care was all about.

And then transforming the alternative care system towards family based and community based care, kind of looping us back round again, to saying that we want the systems to change because although we recognise that alternative care is sometimes necessary, we want to still make sure that children have access to family based and community based care as the first options, and of course, always keeping in mind that cycle of reintegration that's so necessary. And at a systemic level, ensuring all over the world that strategies to ensure deinstitutionalization are developed and that states are held accountable to that. And very important here that children with disabilities are flagged and specially mentioned in this recommendation, because of the fact that we've seen in so many countries where deinstitutionalization methods were employed, it's still often children with disabilities who end up being left behind in the care system. And we've also seen, of course, problems with large institutions just becoming smaller institutions, but still institutions and, and still, with children having no real meaningful change in their lives.

Then F is about supporting children, and preventing family separation in the context of public health emergency. So this was about what was the learning that came out of the COVID experience. And here, there were three kinds of sub recommendations that States should adopt, child and family-centered approaches to public health emergencies, and increased support and services to families to avoid separation during these times, that states should recognise that these services offered to children are emergency lifesaving services, and these are frontline workers. And so that's very important to acknowledge and recognise in public health emergencies and put the necessary supports in place. And then the state should also learn from and build on innovative practices. So, for example, if children were able to go home during the pandemic, we'd have to ask ourselves, why they weren't able to go home before, and what was put in place to allow them to safely go home and so on. So again, thinking globally, this was a bit of an eye opener for some countries who suddenly realised that they could work differently, put in a different situation. And we're hoping that these learnings can flow through into ongoing reforms to systems around the world.

Those recommendations that I've mentioned so far were all recommendations to States. But in the list of recommendations, there are some specific recommendations to NHRIs [National Human Rights Institutions]. And that is they should establish and support monitoring mechanisms to prevent and receive reports about and investigate and then adequately address any cases of violations of children's rights in the context of alternative care. And this, of course, also means that they must be able to look at historic situations as well, and to assist in the provision of seeking redress and remedies for these violations. Civil society organisations are encouraged to together with state authorities strengthen

the coordination and provision of prevention support across all sectors, including through networks, partnerships, integrated services, and communications to strengthen families. And that CSOs should participate in the periodic reviews of reports to state parties and use other mechanisms, including the optional protocol for those states that have ratified it. Unfortunately the United Kingdom hasn't, to review the quality of care in line with human rights standards, and to hold states parties accountable for violations. So reminding us here about the fact that civil society has a kind of mirror responsibilities to those that the States parties bear as well, and to bring their efforts to the table around these issues.

Also, to ensure that the participation of children's human rights defenders in this work, including those with care experience, is very important, and CSOs should support them in reporting and seeking redress for rights violations. Parents and caregivers also come up with some recommendations directed to them, asking them to participate in child protection, decision making, and providing peer support and networking that help parents and their children. Parents and caregivers can also support children and young people to express their views regarding care and take their perspectives into account.

Recommendations to the Committee itself, as I'd mentioned these flow from the DGD. And they come to the Committee but the Committee has endorsed these and accepts them. The Committee should through its monitoring role, provide explicit guidance to State parties on practical steps to be taken to implement international human rights frameworks and commitments, including measures to strengthen prevention of family separation, building integrated systems for child protection, and strategies for deinstitutionalization with specific timeframes and adequate budgets. So really calling on the Committee to continue its monitoring role and to be more specific. And of course, the Committee will certainly be using some of the wording and terminology coming out of these recommendations in its recommendations to States parties going forward. Another recommendation to the Committee was that it should continue to work collaboratively with the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and other human rights treaty bodies, UN agencies, NHRIs, international organisations, etc, civil society, children and adults to receive and exchange knowledge in the field of alternative care. And then we set out many of the areas that were highlighted during the Day of General Discussion. So these are ongoing discussions that we can be having to improve the Committee's guidance that it provides to states parties.

So that brings me to the end, and sorry that it was such a lot - a huge information overload. And I don't feel like I've really even managed to put it all across because it's so detailed. But I do hope that that's encouraged you to feel like you want to go and have a look. And perhaps, you know, delve down into more of the detail and think about how it has an impact on your work. And I'm sure that in the question time we can we can explore it a little bit more. So, I'm going to hand back to you, Miriana.

Miriana Giraldi: Thank you so much for your very rich presentation. I think indeed, each of those topics you highlighted could be the subject of a seminar per se because the conversation was so broad and so deep. But also thank you so much for highlighting the recommendations and how they were directed at different stakeholders. So, it really helps us to reflect what each of us in our respective roles can and should do to move things forward. So, before we jump into the discussion, now it's time to have a look at our first video clip, so, to hear from care experienced young people directly.

[Slide: Why do you think it is important to listen to children and young people? In your opinion, how can we do this better when developing policies and guidance on children's rights and alternative care?]

Saffron Rohan: Okay, so my name is Saffron. I am 27. I'm from Glasgow in Scotland, I have lived experience of the care system, and have worked sort of in and around the care sector since I was 17, in various different roles. I currently work as a trainee business analyst at the moment. So, I got involved in the Day of General Discussion through some work that I did with an organisation called CELCIS. I was part of a working group of consultants with lived experience that were helping to write guidance for the Staying Together and Connected Guidance, which was about sibling contact, and children's rights. And that piece of work got featured in The Day of General Discussion as a sort of example of good practice. So that's how I got involved. And my motivation, same as it is with most of the work I get involved with like this is to, to generally support change and improvements and make sure that young people going through the system now and in the future faced less and less challenges and adversity that I myself and many of my peers faced.

[Slide: Why do you think it is important to listen to children and young people? In your opinion, how can we do this better when developing policies and guidance on children's rights and alternative care?]

Okay, so why, why it's so important to have children and young people's voice at the heart of what we do; well have children and young people at the heart of what we do is because they are the ones that live this, they are the ones that are affected by this. And I think if anything, the work showcased at the Day of General Discussion highlighted more than ever, that we do have the ability to work alongside children and young people and have them working in tandem with policymakers and service designers to have a say and, and a huge role in shaping, shaping improvements. I think we could spend a lot more time sort of committing time to working collaboratively with children and young people. So that means building in time and flexibility for them to have the opportunity to be involved and sort of take the lead in some of this work. It's time intensive, it's resource intensive, and you really need to build in space to build relationships with any young

people you're going to work with. And from those relationships, you will get the best outcomes and the best work and the strongest voice coming through.

So that was a little bit of flavour into the motivation of people with lived experience to contribute to this work and these discussions. And now it's time to dive into our conversation, with Professor Ann Skelton, Bruce Adamson, Megan Moffat and Joanne McMeeking, so to begin to reflect what the work of the DGD is, and the outcomes and recommendations mean for our work here in Scotland. And we shared a few questions with you beforehand, we thought a good place to start was a quite a broad ranging question. Because obviously in Scotland, now we are working towards full incorporation of the UN CRC, and we wanted to hear some reflections about how the DGD and recommendations can really help us in our efforts, when specifically thinking about children who are in care or at the edges of care. Who would like to get started on this big question? Bruce, would you like to come in?

Bruce Adamson: Absolutely and it's great to be here. And thanks to CELCIS for putting this together and everyone for joining us. It is a really exciting time in Scotland with the Bill to incorporate the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child being passed by the Scottish Parliament last March, obviously, we're subject to a bit of delay because of the Supreme Court decision, but ongoing commitment from Government and from all of the Members of Parliament to get this through Parliament. And we would hope through Parliament after the summer and commence certainly by the end of the year is my intention. And I think that that's a really fantastic foundation for us to build on the work that's been done all through the Day of General Discussion, but also the incredible work that was already being done in Scotland, through the Independent Care Review and now The Promise. I think the important foundation that Ann set out earlier in terms of the Convention being built on this idea of a family environment of happiness and love and understanding and the use of the word love. I've got a logo in my office that that Megan on a Who Cares? camp defaced with the word love across it, it's got pride of place in my office. But that word love that comes through so strongly is really important. But it finds its home in the Preamble to the Convention. And the Convention consistently talks about the fact that we should try and strengthen families and support families and so that so that going into alternative care should be only if it's in the child's best interest as really a last resort. And then that special protection and assistance, which kicks in for those that are in alternative care, those additional rights protections, and particularly if a child sort of situation of loss of liberty in something like secure care, and that those things that came through really strongly through all of this work through the DGD, but also through the Independent Care Review about the importance of children's voice, which again, one of the guiding principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child having a voice in all decisions, which affect children, and we know from care experience children and young people that that hasn't been happening; that decisions should be in a child's best interest, again, some serious questions about whether the decision making frameworks we have,

are properly robust in terms of ensuring that we take a proper approach to best interest. And things like the use of available resources to the maximum extent possible some real questions around funding. And the points that Ann raised again, on things like access to justice. I think in Scotland, we often kind of pride ourselves in the fact that we've had a Children's Hearings System for a very long time. But what Megan and other really strong voices from the care experience community did when they challenged Government on this and led to the Independent Care Review and led to The Promise was really holding up a mirror to us in terms of saying we're not living up to those obligations. And so, there's so much that we can discuss also, I think it's important that we recognise the context of COVID. And having lived through a global pandemic the last couple of years and the huge pressure that's put on everyone, particularly those whose rights are already most at risk, and the impacts on mental health, the impacts on the adults that support children, the impacts on families, and then again, war in Europe and the significant numbers of Children on the Move in Europe as a result of Russian escalation of the invasion of Ukraine, and what that what pressure that's putting on across Europe in terms of care provision. So, there's lots and lots I'm looking forward to talking about but particularly the voice of the child, some issues around the definition of the child in Scotland which is a bit confused in places, secure care which is something that's subject to legislative consultation at the moment. Cross Border placements, real concern about children from other places, particularly England, in Scotland and whether their rights are properly being respected, restraint, seclusion, sibling contact, we could talk all day. But I think I'll probably stop there, and just really come back to the point that it's the fundamental principles around making sure that children's voice, their best interest, those special care and protections, the care experienced young people, the supports for the family, taking a rights based approach is absolutely essential to living up to those obligations. And incorporation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child gives us a fantastic framework to build a culture of human rights, but also to put in place that really important accountability for the failures that are that are currently happening.

Joanne McMeeking: Thank you for that, Bruce. And that was incredibly detailed, and you whistled through a whole host of strategic themes, and also some concerns that you had as well around the current context in Scotland, but also right at the very beginning, what you were acknowledging in terms of the progress that Scotland has made, and the quote from you was, "This is a really exciting time in Scotland, especially in and around the incorporation even though we've had a little bit of a stall with the Supreme Court." And what I wanted to do was just lean across to Megan, and to build on that conversation Megan. And from your perspective, where do you think Scotland is with the UN CRC and incorporation? What would be your view on that? And what's the areas that you think have gone well, and that we need to work harder on? And that just touches on what Saffron said to us in the PowerPoint that she popped up with the question, and also a bit of a reflection was around, "you can learn from us, we've got a lot to tell you. And you have to give us the space and the time, and you have to allow us to get to know you and

for you to get to know us in order that we can work really hard together to make this really good".

Megan Moffat: Thanks, Joanne, that is a huge question. And I'm just trying to get it all straight in my head. Where are we then, I guess, with Scotland's commitment to the UN CRC? I think the political will is definitely there, you know, you watch the news, and you maybe see other Prime Ministers or countries, you're like, we have a very different kind of tone here. And Scotland has a commitment to be the best place in the world. And it's very useful that they've put that phrase in writing, and things aren't maybe going so well. But a lot of the recommendations that Ann covered with us match up strongly with what The Promise has said. And a lot on actually keeping families together, and you know, one of my friends I heard say, once, you know, if you kind of you leave poverty long enough, it can start to look like neglect. And there is a lot we can do to keep families together. And I was really pleased to see that in the report, and a lot on tackling prejudices and harmful beliefs. And I don't think Scotland is quite there yet with the sort of public understanding of what care is. And we know that that is going to be really important if we're going to tackle the discrimination - stigma doesn't often feel strong enough - to actually address some of the issues that care experienced people face, particularly later in life, maybe when they become parents themselves, or when they're applying for a job or you know, a landlord wants a guarantor. These are all sort of issues that we know older care experienced people face. And I often feel in Scotland that we take really strong bold actions like the Equal Protection Act, or the anti-smacking laws, as the media was kind of calling it, and was like globally significant. But then again, I worry about, I guess, the minority groups are again kind of left out of some of these big actions, so restraint of children in care and in schools, children with disabilities, and young offenders institutions are still not covered by that bill. It was supposed to protect children from forms of violence and uphold their rights. But, again, that was actually missed from that bill. And we know that children's voice and advocacy and participation is becoming the norm in a lot of policymaking decisions. But then you look at children and secure care children coming in cross border placements, children from other countries and again, these are the minorities that are getting missed. And so, yeah, I don't want to talk for too long, but I guess that is my kind of where we at with the UN CRC is we're doing a lot of good things, but we're maybe still missing people.

Joanne McMeeking: Megan, thank you for that. And for your original observation, that was a really big question. You answered it beautifully, you went right across the strategic and you went into the operational in terms of the day to day experience of making and doing some very bold things in Scotland. And what you were seeing without using the words, this is what I was picking up as well, what does this look like in practice? How does this happen in the moment, so you can have your bold statements, you can push through your legislation, but you have to be able to practice differently on the ground. And that has to feel different for children and young people and families, or it's not going to mean much

to people, it's not going to mean much to people. And that might be the place that we want to move in and around a little bit when we go across to Ann. Because Ann was offering some recommendations about how you can strengthen the rights of the child. And she talked a little bit about the workforce as well, in one of your slides Ann, I was really interested in that as well. And I wonder if we can then swing back from that when you're finished Ann to do a little bit of thinking around how do we think COVID-19 has affected the implementation of children rights in Scotland, I'd be really interested to hear that. And if I could direct people to think a little bit about poverty with that, and also digital exclusion as well, which was very significant and Scotland alongside lockdowns, and not getting the right access to support and services and advocacy as well. Ann, from a workforce perspective, what would you see would be the priorities in order to strengthen the UN CRC incorporation in Scotland and internationally?

Ann Skelton: I think it's really important to ensure that the Convention itself is well known by people working in the sector. And perhaps sometimes we skim over this a little bit, you know, we just make assumptions that people will know what the Convention is all about and why it's important, and why incorporation takes Scotland to a new level. So I think one of the big advantages of direct incorporation that you're doing is that it creates a lot of opportunity to have those conversations, but it is important to make sure that you have those conversations, because otherwise, you can think that you've ticked the box by incorporating but if incorporating is just something that Parliament does, then it's not going to work. It only works if it's something that everybody does, there's a kind of internalised incorporation so that in every area of the work, we think about how is my work reflecting the Convention? And not only the Convention, but the broader framing within the DGDs and within the General Comments and that kind of thing? You know, it doesn't surprise me listening to Bruce and Megan, I think that what I'm hearing is what comes out of the DGD resonates with a lot of what's already been said in Scotland. But what I think you can see the DGD as, and this outcomes document and the recommendations as, it's as almost like an echo chamber, right. So, the reason why it sounds familiar is because a lot of your inputs went in, and now it's coming back to you, but it's kind of coming back to amplified, and it has a little bit of umph behind it because it's endorsed by the Committee on the Rights of the Child. And, and when people asked me, you know, how does the Committee make sure that things that that what they say really happens, the truth is the Committee cannot make things happen. But things happen if people on the ground make them happen. So, in a sense, there's no option but to hand the ball back to you as the implementers at the national level, and at your own local levels where you're working to say it only works as well as you make it work. But what you now have is a set of recommendations that you can point to and say, you know, we told you this, but now the Committee is telling you this as well. So perhaps that's one of the major things that something like a DGD does is it takes the knowledge from all over the world the learnings that we're getting, and then it frames them under the Convention and hands that back. So, I think that in training going forward in developing the workforce, you

know, these are all important outcomes to take forward there. So that's my main answer to you on that, I would say. And on the COVID stuff, yeah, I mean, I think already people are saying, it's surprising how quickly we're normalising back. And that we may lose that impetus of what did we learn from this? And how can we use it? So we shouldn't delay on that. I would say those are really important things to start working on now. What did we learn? How can we reflect that back into what we want to do going forward? Because it'll soon become a memory. And we need to act on it before we forget.

Joanne McMeeking: Ann thank you for that. And the detail around the workforce, you know, has me really curious and quite interested around how can it be integrated, but also the clout of the DGD as well, which is a very sharp focus for us in Scotland, because it's, it's more than individuals, or it's more than a collection or a small group of people who think this is a really good idea. As we said early on, there has been strong political will around the UN CRC within Scotland, we've had The Promise as well, who are still with us and making sure that we are realising the ambitions of The Promise and the Independent Care Review and the voice of many thousands of children and young people who told their stories. And we're quite clearly saying we need to absolutely listen to them, you have to keep the promise. And each individual care journey has been very unique to each individual child and young person as well. And where I wanted to go next was a deeper conversation around COVID. And I've just had my eye on the time here. And my understanding is that I'm a three o'clock finish. So, I'm asking you to answer a very, very difficult question in three minutes. And if you can do that, I'll be incredibly impressed. But what I can do is just hold on to some of the core themes and make sure that that's bundled in the feedback in the summary as well. And I touched on the poverty aspect of the pandemic, and what that has meant for many, many children. And we know in Scotland there are several hundred thousand children living in poverty within Scotland, and that has increased from 2014-2015, and has increased quite significantly. And the worry has been that with the cost of living crisis, with the pandemic, we are seeing more children in really tricky and difficult situations. And we talk about early help. And we talk about the workforce. And then we look at the budgets that sit within early help and family support. And that turn that people need to take to get in help early effective help, in order that families can stay together and that children can thrive. And I just wanted to ask a question of Bruce. Bruce, in terms of the children's rights impact assessments, and some of the lessons have been learned in Scotland during the pandemic, what would be your priorities going forward?

Bruce Adamson: I think one of the things that really concerns me was that we had made significant progress in Scotland prior to the pandemic on children's rights and children's voice and things like impact assessments. And then as soon as the system was tested, that all disappeared, and we defaulted back to old norms. And so, children were saying that their voices weren't included in decision making, there was no impact assessment. So we ended up doing an independent children's rights impact assessment in order to assist

decision makers on COVID. But that really should have been the responsibility of Government. That'll be locked in once we have incorporation, because it is in the incorporation bill, but that was really concerning that that the progress that we thought we'd made wasn't there. Even prior to COVID, when we asked children, young people what the most important human rights issues were, they said, poverty and mental health were the top two; those were massively exacerbated by COVID. And there was a disproportionate impact on care experienced young people, but also young carers, children of prisoners, disabled children. And when we look at the care experience community, there's a lot of intersectionality there, as well. And so, there's really specific concerns at the sharpest end, things like children who were in secure or in young offenders institutes weren't eligible for early release programme, and were subjected to some very, very restrictive regimes during that. So real concern there, but at the universal level, as well, when school buildings closed and universal community-based services disappeared, broader kinship support was harder to access because of restrictions that created huge, huge problems. And we still don't know, we still haven't got the data in terms of just how big a problem that is. I mean, we can go into conversations about access to technology, also just space, if you've got a nice big house with a garden, then locked down was very different if you're in substandard, overcrowded housing. And so that differential experience of COVID was so huge. And again, Who Cares?, Megan can talk about, did amazing work and kind of mapping some of that out and bringing those issues to the attention of decision makers. But I think learning, going forward, what my big takeaway is, given that we're out of time, we've got to get the voice of children and young people into decision making in a really systematic, structured way. And that has to operate even better in emergency situations, rather than forgetting to include them. We made mistakes in Scotland, because we didn't get the voice of children and young people, and we didn't do a proper rights based approach by using tools like impact assessments, that meant that we made mistakes, which had direct impact on those children, whose rights, were already most at risk. And so we really have to learn from that and use those tools and make sure that children's voices are right at the heart of decision making.

Joanne McMeeking: Thank you, Bruce. And just so mindful that we're now out of time, I think we could have had another hour, we possibly could have had all sorted and an hour, couldn't we? And it would have also given us an opportunity to analyse and consider some of the quick and fast and quality interventions that had to be made during the pandemic, that we would want to hold on to and that we would want to keep. And that would have been an area that we would have wanted to go around too. I think that would have been really important for us. But just a final sort of note for me, before I hand over to Miriana, what has come across really strongly for me has been that the commitment must be matched by the deeds, I think that is really significant. And that's a message that's coming through in the work. And it's also a message that Megan has been giving us as well around voice and a number of unheard voices as well; it touches on what Bruce was saying, that there needs to be a structure that needs to be a framework. Even in a crisis,

we go back to that framework. And that keeps us incredibly solid as we move forward. So can I just say a big thanks to Ann, to Megan, to Bruce. Sorry, we had to cut things short, it was just getting really quite exciting and interesting. I was on the edge of my seat. And I'm now going to hand it over to Miriana. Thanks again.

Miriana Giraldi: Thank you so much for this incredibly rich conversation, but no fear we have some more time. So, we also received some questions from the audience. So thank you so much for sending those through. And before we start discussing them, and you will be glad to hear that a lot of them are along the topics that you were tackling right now. So that will give us a chance to continue this exchange. But right now we'll have a quick look at our second video to just gather a few more inputs from care experienced people.

[Slide: In Scotland, we are currently working towards the full incorporation of the UNCRC. How can the outcomes/ recommendations of the DGD help us all to ensure that the rights of all children in alternative care, or at the edges of care, are protected and fulfilled?]

Saffron Rohan: I think the key thing is to, to work together, collaboration and having those relationships is the key. So I think Interagency Working having everyone on board, creating a culture of commitment and voice being the first thing you think about not something you try and incorporate into what you're already doing. That should be the starting point is who, what young people what people with lived experience, are we going to get to drive this forward and to help shape this? Yeah, and I think just generally working together to uphold the rights of children and pushing it more as a focus and awareness and creating a culture where it is at the forefront of any sort of design or policy work we do.

[Slide: What can we do to ensure that love, trust, and safety are part of the experience of every child in alternative care?]

I think that's easy. I think we start by designing recruitment procedures that look for practitioners and service designers and policymakers and carers that are committed and dedicated to getting the best for all children in alternative care. And I mean, dedicated to getting the same kind of outcomes for those children as they would their own, and actually showing love and showing understanding, I think we need to create a culture where it's not something you need to be afraid of, but it's something that actually should be encouraged. And having a workforce that want the same things for these children as they do our own, as is the way to do that.

Miriana Giraldi: Some very powerful quotes there about voice, about participation and about relationships; and also, I think, really important to highlight examples of when things work well and how that can be done. So just looking at some questions that have come in... There's a few about advocacy and rights and independent advocacy. And this is

something that we have already started to explore with that meaningful participation. And maybe we can consider this a little bit more. So, we've got a couple of questions that have come in about - asking how we can best ensure that all children, young people have equal access to advocacy, regardless of the local authority in which they are placed. And there's another question also about considering why children may be offered independent advocacy only when the system finds it useful. So, we'd like to start with some reflections about that. And maybe Megan, I'm sure you have something to say about it.

Megan Moffat: Yeah, definitely. That's, that's the perfect setup, thank you, Miriana. So COVID, a lot of the issues that COVID created, didn't actually create them, it just exacerbated them. And a lot of what was happening just became worse because we were having to restrict ourselves and take a more risk averse approach. But a lot of what was happening with the poverty, the exclusion, the poor mental health, was already happening for care experienced people, the rest of the population were suddenly just experiencing it. And what we've spoken about already about children in settings like secure (care), children in cross border placements, were kind of more at risk of these issues. And it's often because they are seen less - they see the professionals in their lives less, who they have a trusting relationship with who they're able to talk about what's going on. And for me, the answer to so many of these issues is to have an independent advocate, and independent being that it is financially, psychologically, and physically separate from a care provider or service. And you know, they're not a children's rights officer in a local authority, because the issue with that is that somewhere up the chain, suddenly they have the same boss. And if it is too big of an issue, it's not the children's rights issue that is going to win out in that. So, for me, how do we make sure that every child has equal advocacy or access to advocacy, no matter what local authority they're in? Is it's a national contract, really, I believe that advocacy needs to be commissioned by the Scottish Government, and we can't be raising issues and then have local authorities say like, Hey, you need to you need to stop talking about this as making us look bad. And if it's in law, and there's the Care and Justice Bill coming up, I'm really hoping there's going to be something in that. And for young people and young offenders, secure care because we know that it basically cannot be, it can't be commissioned based on whether the local body wants to hear it or not. By putting it in law and making a national contract, it's the only way it's going to be truly independent.

Miriana Giraldi: Thank you so much, Megan, for those reflections. And I see nodding from Bruce. So just wanted to ask if you'd like to come in on any of these points.

Bruce Adamson: I think Megan as always has really captured it perfectly. It's that need for independence, but also the perception of independence and the ability to build trust, and I think that the consistency across Scotland is really, really concerning that we can see the huge benefit of really powerful advocacy, when it works well. But also, the absence of advocacy is really telling as well. But I think Megan and colleagues at Who Cares? have

done an amazing job at it kind of capturing the power of advocacy, but also really starting to map out where there's some gaps. So, I just endorse everything that Megan said.

Miriana: Fantastic, thank you. Both of you have already mentioned, the question of cross border placements, and specifically children from England being placed in in Scotland. And we have some questions around that, and also highlighting how cross border placements can be of extreme concern to some areas. And, and so there are some questions about what this means that children are separated from the families and friends and their communities. And also questions around whether or not they should be subject to the law as it pertains in Scotland. So, I think it's quite technical, but I was wondering if we want to reflect a little bit on those. And also Ann, if you think you can come in also, from your broader experience, obviously, of considering these issues internationally. If there's any advice that you can, you can share with us.

Ann Skelton: Perhaps let me go first, and I'll just, I'll speak quite generally. And then Bruce, and Megan can come and fill in on the more detailed stuff. But this actually is what we wanted to hear about this, particularly, that came through from Europe. So, prior to the DGD, in the Council of Europe, they had a survey, and one of the questions that were asked in the survey was about cross border placements of children. And it was quite alarming to see that there were still a fair number of cross border placements in Europe, happening across borders, where children, particularly children in the criminal justice system, or children with sort of high needs, in care and protection would be placed across the border. Just in terms of how human rights protection works, is this: children must be protected where they are, in terms of human rights. So, it doesn't matter if you're from England, or you were ordered by a court in England to come to Scotland, now that you're in Scotland, the authorities in Scotland become responsible, okay, it's a little bit complicated in the UK, because you're all actually part of one State, let's put it that way. But I mean, it would be very, very clear, if we were talking about sending a child from France to Germany or something, then we would, we would be absolutely clear that once that child leaves France and gets into Germany, then Germany becomes responsible for what happens to them when they are there. And the Committee on the Rights of the Child has actually more and more seen that both states might be responsible, actually. So in this situation, I would say that there are shared responsibilities between England and Scotland to work out good solutions for these children, but that Scotland needs, particularly following incorporation, to be particularly wary about taking on responsibilities where they are not able to have the space to do what they think is right for those children, have the budgets that allow them to do what is right for those children, and kind of get caught between these different systems. And I'm speaking to this without actually knowing a lot about I don't know a lot about how those cross-border placements work. But I have seen that it's coming up as an issue, and I'm looking forward myself to hearing you know, what those of you who worked with us more directly have to say about it.

Bruce Adamson: So if I could come in on it, as Ann set out, the human rights principles here are really clear that the same obligations apply. But this is a real, real mess. My office has been working on this now for a number of years, it's been one of the main strategic litigation things that we've been involved in. So, we've been intervening in a large number of these cases because of huge concern. And my colleagues actually produced a really good paper on this a few months ago, which I can circulate the link to which actually goes through it. It's amazing. I didn't write it, so I can say that it was amazing that it goes through kind of all of the different details in all the different aspects and quite a lot of detail. And so I'll send that rather than speak to it just on the interest of time. But I think those core principles about moving children away from their community, that's a really big concern. So, it should only be where it's necessary and in their best interests, are real big concern about whether children should be being moved at all, how their voice is brought into decision making, there are huge concerns there. And then when they're in Scotland really big concern about the fact that they're coming in under English orders, and then haven't been subjected to any of the support and protection that exists for children that are in the Scottish system. And so, they're in Scotland, they should be subject to all of the same local authority, NHS obligations. But there's a massive problem with data in terms of a lot of these children, we didn't even know that they were here, because they were coming in under English orders going into private institutions, often at risk of loss of liberty. And they're not being linked properly into all of the oversight mechanisms, or the legal protections that exist in Scotland. And that's a huge concern anyway, but then it's a particular concern where Scotland has higher standards than England. And again, as we see the different approach that two countries are taking in terms of respect for rights generally, and some of you will be following what's happening in the House of Commons today on the repeal of the Human Rights Act. So, this creates actually even a bigger concern that we've got children who are very much going off the radar. So we've been litigating this in the courts here for some time, the Scottish Government's response to that has been to bring in a set of regulations that have just come through Parliament to provide a kind of short term legislative fix, but we've very publicly said that that's not enough, it needs to go much further, in terms of putting in place proper legal protection and giving children who are in Scotland, all of the same protections, that children who started in Scotland have got. And again, with really clear kind of pathways and standards, kind of local strategies, the role of the Care Inspectorate, advocacy, health, particularly mental health provision, so all of all of those things have to be really clear. So we're here Scotland still a very, very large numbers, and particularly in secure care. Some of those that are in secure care actually, and this slightly different because we know, we know them if they're going into the Scottish secure care system. And so, so big concerns about the large numbers that are going into regulated secure care, but also huge concern about the numbers that are going into private residential, outwith the inspection regimes and things like that. So we've got concerns at both ends in terms of the deprivation of liberty and in terms of secure, but also at the other end in terms of children that are in private accommodation and the real need to put in place data

monitoring. So that's of number one, kind of knowing who the children are, where they are and what they need, making sure that the deprivation of liberty and even if that's kind of informal deprivation, again, if you're if you're out in the, in the countryside, you can't actually leave in any meaningful way. So real concern about making sure that there's proper regulation, authorization, in the same way there would be in the Children's Hearings System, and particularly accessing services and kind of best interest principles there, as well. So it's all the same issues, I'll just maybe stop there, and people can maybe read the, the position paper, but it's a huge concern, the regulations which the Scottish Government has now brought through Parliament, don't go far enough in addressing this, but there is attention focused on it. And so that is useful that both before the Courts and before the Parliament, there's a recognition of this issue, we're not quite at the solution yet, and all of those issues still exist. But at least I think now, there's probably a stronger recognition of what's been going on for a number of years and the high level of concern that we have about children, usually from England. And I think that then this links into much broader concerns about what's happening with kind of Ukraine and Children on the Move and some of the pressures that's putting across Europe in terms of children ending up in the care system, systems, plural, without proper oversight.

Joanne McMeeking: Can I add some other sort of prepared perspectives to that as well. The Promise were very, very clear that Scotland must stop the sale of placements to local authorities outside Scotland. And that was very clear from The Promise. And it's helpful for us to think together about well, what is the driver to this? Why is this happening? And our understanding is there's inadequate provision in England, which is driving cross border placements as well. So, I think that's a real important understanding of what's the why of this, too? And then finally, for us, and you know, just building on what Bruce was saying, we have the regulations that are now through. I think they may be publicly available at some point in the next few days, there is the Care and Justice Bill that is moving in and around and is due to be... the consultation period is due to finish quite soon. So there'll be a whole number of consultation responses coming in from a number of very interested organisations, and very interested folks around this particular area, the Care and Justice Bill asked very specific questions around cross border in the Care and Justice response, we have that it's currently in draft form, it's just about to be signed off. And we will send that through to Scottish Government. And what we're saying, it's not going far enough. It's not going far enough, that the Scottish and the UK Governments need to get around the table, they need to address these issues, and they need to talk to each other as a matter of priority, alongside all the other pieces that Bruce has helpfully filled us in. I think that's absolutely key here as well. We know it's tricky. We know it's complex, we know it's a wicked issue, but we have children that we know are not getting the right services at the right time. And then the final point for me for is to have an eye and a consideration to the unique journey of every child. So, we know that we've got secure and we've got residential established. But we also have to consider when we are making

legislation and thinking about these conversations, and doing something around cross border, that we are considering kinship care placements that are sitting cross border, and also foster care placements. And I think they may be even more invisible than secure and residential establishments. And we have to have an eye on all the different types of care settings, and all the uniqueness of each young person, each child who's in that type of family, or in that type of group living or in that type of institution.

Miriana Giraldi: Thank you so much. You answer the question, but at the same time you touched upon so many other important issues. And I was hoping to bundle two topics into one final question, but I'm not sure we have the time. But just wanted to recognise that there's quite a lot of questions coming through also on various aspects of relationships, so building relationships between the staff, the professionals, and the young people and, and how to also really take the time to make sure that that takes place. And I wanted to reflect on that, when considering also the question of quality care and the different ways, forms of care that we have and how that can be highlighted - yeah, whether it is in foster care or kinship or residential care. And there was also an acknowledgement in the questions and comments that have come through about a lively debate that is ongoing at the moment in the UK on these issues. But those of us that work more internationally can also confirm that there is definitely a very lively debate about that internationally as well. Unfortunately, we only have seven minutes left for the seminar. So, we won't have the opportunity to go into that in detail. But one may always hope that we might meet again in the future to consider some of these other issues that are just so relevant. So, I would just like to thank you all of you for your reflections, your contributions, you've managed to squeeze in so much rich information in a short time. So, thank you very much. And before handing on to Heather to wrap up the seminar, we're just going to watch our final video clip, that is also forward looking and encourages us to think about what will be positive outcomes going forward.

[Slide: The Day of General Discussion touched upon many important topics. In your opinion, what would be a good outcome of the DGD for children and young people in Scotland?]

Saffron Rohan: So for children and young people in Scotland, I hope the outcome would be that overall awareness of children's rights and the guidance we worked on to support brothers and sisters staying together was generally a lot more known about and I hope that it would support in the implementation and commitment of meeting that guidance and in making these improvements. I think there needs to be commitment at all levels across government and more collaborative working between government and third sector organisations, to make sure that there are no gaps in practice and how we work. And it would be great to see sort of a renewed focus on keeping The Promise in Scotland. And a general focus around implementing the UN CRC.

Heather Ottaway: Thank you everyone so much for joining us throughout the seminar. What a fascinating, fascinating discussion and, and lots of food for thought. I think one of the things that struck me was, you know, there are reasons for us to be hopeful in Scotland. There is a strong political will and commitment to properly realising the rights of children, and in meeting The Promise. But I was also very struck by something Joanne said, which is that commitment by itself isn't enough. They have to be matched by deeds. And within that, I think what we know is the complexity that is present in fully implementing something as complex as UN CRC. And certainly what's come out of the discussions today about the challenges around quality care, around cross border placements around how we meaningfully not only here, incorporate children's views, experience and voice in every aspect of the work we do with children and their families in Scotland, alongside some of those significant challenges around poverty, and providing early family support and ensuring that children can remain within their own families and homes and communities. So, all in all, I just say I think reason to be hopeful, but also a lot of work for us to do. Thank you so much to Ann, to Megan, to Bruce and to Joanne and to my co-chair Miriana for giving us a lot of food for thought both in how we do that, but also thinking about some practical solutions.

And I'd also on behalf of CELCIS like to thank those of you that have joined us for the webinar today, but also to our organising team that have supported the organisation of the seminar. So that's Amy Coull, Rosie Moore, Emma Dixon, Jeremy Bayston, Jennifer Davidson at the Institute for Inspiring Children's Futures and Cameron-Wong McDermott from the Office of the Commissioner. Just to say have a good rest of the day and I hope we can meet again to think these things through more.